

**Message from President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, on 'Youm-e-Istehsal' (5 August 2025)**

Today, the sixth anniversary of India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is being somberly observed. That day, India scrapped the special status of IIOJK and bifurcated it into two so-called 'Union Territories' to alter its internationally-recognized disputed status and undermine the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

The Indian authorities have taken a number of steps, aimed at changing the IIOJK's demographic structure and political landscape, during last six years. These measures include gerrymandering of the electoral constituencies, allowing addition of non-Kashmiris to electoral rolls, issuance of domicile certificates to outsiders, granting more powers to the Lieutenant Governor in administrative matters, and introduction of new laws on ownership of land and property.

India has increased its oppression in IIOJK since 5 August 2019. As a result, the Kashmiri people are confronted with the danger of becoming a disempowered community in their own land. The genuine leadership of the Kashmiri people remains behind bars. The intimidation of innocent people, arbitrary detentions, and the so-called 'cordon and search' operations have become a matter of routine. The local media has been silenced. The Kashmiri people are unable to fully enjoy their freedoms of expression and assembly. Most importantly, they are unable to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

In the context of India's recent aggression against Pakistan, this year's "*Youm-e-Istehsal*" assumes greater significance. While the resounding success of the 'Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos' is a matter of great pride for the people of Pakistan, the day also underscores the need for a settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people, for a lasting peace in South Asia.

For its part, Pakistan will continue to extend all possible political, diplomatic and moral support to the people of IIOJK for the fullest realization of their legitimate rights.